Twilight of a Superpower: How Late-stage Capitalism has Cannibalized the United States and Steps to Repair the Damage.
4th Revision, August 4 2023
All inquiries: palethreshold@gmail.com, c/o Verge Bliss

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1) Foreword – Ancient Perspectives on our Current Culture

Though I am not the definitive source on Chaco Canyon, I present some basic information here as a demonstration not only of our nation's forgotten history but the ways in which the concepts of late-stage capitalism existed even a thousand years ago. Please see References section to learn more.

Our best source for information about the Anasazi is the Diné. Their oral tradition has preserved a great deal of the ancient history of the American Southwest which remains highly pertinent to our modern and colonialized sensibilities.

The center of Anasazi culture was the settlement of stonework buildings at Chaco Canyon. Trade flourished throughout the region and may have stretched as far south as Mexico. Everything from macaw feathers to pottery traceable to several different contemporary tribes have been found at the site. One of the more controversial finds at Chaco has been caches of human bones exhibiting pot polish and knife marks which can be an indicator of cannibalism. The means by which the Chaco culture flourished and traded with other communities was build around human slavery.

As the closest tribe to the Anasazi, the Diné traded with this settlement a lot. Their accounts of gambling for human lives which took place there are certainly worth hearing. However, when humans were purchased from the Anasazi, they were no longer treated as a commodity but were absorbed into the Diné society, maintaining their own tribal customs alongside the greater Diné culture.

Currently we have helming our nation those who seek to keep us in bondage. We must find methods and means to purchase back our collective freedom.

2) Preface

Eras throughout history have been marked by their particular trends, fashions, events, prevailing morals, and other such indicators used to compartmentalize the passage of time into easily digestible categories. Things rarely fit this succinctly into neat little boxes, but rather our experiences give us milestones by which to gauge our own chronological progress. Perhaps most people enjoy the popular games, social media platforms, music, and styles of dress associated with this time, by which I refer to the years immediately following the pandemic but have felt like this for much of my life – that I personally am out of step with the trends. I cherry-pick from the cumulative pool, taking what parts of culture I appreciate and leaving the rest. While this could be attributable to my advanced years my tastes have always been thus.

Every age has its benefits, its problems, its pools of nostalgic bliss, its empty promises for the future. Now is no different. However, as I have felt personally out of step over a much longer period than most others seem to feel, I have chosen to document my opinions of how I would prefer things to be. I do come from a place of relative privilege – my parents were able to send me to Georgia State University without taking out loans, and they own two or three residences in Georgia and North Carolina. Not wealthy, but I do have the privilege of generational wealth and these examples I feel express accurately the extent of said privilege.

My father was a lifelong civil servant in two separate government entities until his retirement in the late 2000's. His day job was as an engineer and later supervisor for Housing and Urban Development and I watched him rise steadily through the ranks of the Naval Reserve throughout my childhood as a Seabee, the Construction Battalion. Through these two career paths he worked persistently on the infrastructure not just of this country but globally as well, even closing his career by enforcing ADA code in public buildings.

Because of my perspective I speak mostly to the American Experience – life within the United States projected through the prism of our myriad shared lens, multifaceted like the eye of a great insect and buzzing with the same mindless energy driven by biological imperative. I love this country immensely and I miss it every single day. We must all reclaim this nation from a place of self acknowledgement, psychospiritual awakening, and personal responsibility.

Our two-party, centralized system of governance fails each of us. Currently those two parties consist of the conservatives and the complacents, those who are ultra-aware of their goals and will stop at nothing to achieve them in polarized conflict with those who merely want to preserve the livelihoods of those marginalized by our current systems. That's not good enough. Change requires action, stopping at nothing to succeed at one's goals.

Political strategist Lee Atwater can be held responsible for much of the federal policy since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 even though his physical vessel expired in 1991. His so-called “Southern Strategy” provided stage dressing for the convoluted web of polarizing misinformation in which we currently collectively squirm, waiting for the oligarchs to bleed us dry. Casting doubt upon the most obvious of truths has dealt irreparable harm to our psyches and ability to discern what is correct for each individual within our symbiosis.

Is the government even really to blame? Although clearly some aspects of national policy must be changed in order for all of us to live well here, how much more of the human suffering can be traced to the particular brand of late-stage capitalism currently crunching the marrow from our bones?

Money is a resource, yes, but moreso what it represents is the ability to standardize our trade systems within an agreed framework. Money is a social contract between two legal entities such that a prior relationship of trust-building need not have taken place. Money makes it possible to walk into any store and not have to bring three chickens and two dozen eggs to the grocery store for transactional purposes, hoping that today your grocer will need the resources you are able to provide. Furthermore it

makes the logistics of purchase through digital platforms possible. By hoarding what is basically a social contract the oligarchy have put a choke hold on every other resource we require for basic existence – housing, healthcare, education, and the rest.

I say this not because I intend to repackage Marx for a new generation but as part of this prefacing of the issues we face in changing how things are currently going.

2) Establishing criteria for change

Some readers may already understand what I mean by the term “third space”. I would like to posit also that it cannot just be “one additional space” but rather the removal of commercial interest from the maintenance of common, privately owned public spaces. While the home space provides sustenance and a place of rest, the workplace is supposed to provide a means of support to the individual. What is called “third space” provides a social outlet to the individual and can be a public park, bar, restaurant, shopping mall, library, or other public meeting place.

Many of the places on this list are indeed “third spaces” but participation implies commercial interest. These places are also important for a thriving society but cannot be the cornerstones of public meeting space. With commercial interest come other factors such as unhealthy dependence on food, alcohol, or impulsive spending habits.

Without such spaces making new connections among people becomes increasingly difficult and contingent upon disposable income. The effect of this is isolating people from each other, especially where income distribution is concerned. Those who can afford to attend events that cost money will only meet other people who have that kind of disposable income, thereby limiting the demographic eligible for participation.

Most DIY shows have a policy of not turning anyone away for lack of funds but rather encouraging payment as a way of supporting the venue and performers involved. This highlights one of the most important aspects of third space which is community building. Without these common spaces which are not controlled by power structures, authoritarian or corporate interests, people are restricted in their ability to organize. Choking off these meeting places restricts the movement of the populace at large by those who hold space as a resource.

Access to resources dictates so many aspects of artistic expression. Although art can be made from even the most humble of media the ability to gain exposure for this work is incredibly limited by lack of funding. Whether in the form of billboards, flyers, sponsored posts, or even having the time outside of work to take part in word-of-mouth marketing all the ways in which one's art might be promoted to the point that it might become successful hinge upon access to capital.

Previously one could post on social media about one's art and those posts might be seen and lead to one's art being discovered by a broader audience. Now everything is driven by algorithms and posts specific to art and music events are suppressed in favor of more polarizing posts featuring political opinions or memes. Even with sponsored or paid content the amount spent on a single post must exceed USD$100 before any noticeable effect takes place.

A devastating fire December 2, 2016 at Oakland venue the Ghost Ship may have been the turning point for DIY spaces across the US. This space was not only used for music events but low-income housing for artists in the prohibitively expensive Bay Area. Reports on the state of the interior space vary, but code violations related to fire safety may have contributed to the incident's casualty count. After this fire countless similar DIY residential and art spaces were raided by law enforcement and shut down due to code violations. Although safety is important and crucial in living spaces many of those displaced during this time could not afford other housing which is the reason behind their occupying these DIY spaces. Those spaces which were used only for music and art events being shut down did displace many upcoming events as well.

Real estate prices have a deleterious effect on many different facets of modern life, especially when prevailing wages are unwilling to keep up with the cost of living and inflation. Speculation, underbuilding of lower-income single-family housing, and corporate interests have gutted our current housing market to the point that now a person may have no prior mental or drug abuse issues as well as gainfully employed and still end up housing challenged. While this problem did exist prior to March 2020 the effects of the covid-19 pandemic on homelessness is still progressing and unfolding as of this writing. This has a two-fold effect on music and art spaces – unavailability of space for use as well as

suppression of artists who are unable to afford safe and comfortable housing in which to create.

State governments across the US at the time of writing have been passing legislation to suppress the LGBT+ agenda. This takes the form of banning drag performances and witholding gender-affirming care specifically. Banning of drag shows because of moralistic concerns effectively outlaws other forms of expression as well whether strictly related to gender presentation or not. Gender-affirming care can and should be considered life-saving.

More insidious than the censorship instituted by the government is that which comes as a result of corporate interest. Unlike laws which are written using concrete language and accessible to the general public corporate censorship can take any form which seems the most likely to ameliorate the stockholders which means the rules shift over time and usually become increasingly restrictive to avoid offending any single person real or usually theoretical. Words which may be considered triggering are replaced by nonsensical analogs to avoid being throttled by the algorithm or the user banned from the platform.

What purpose this serves is to further erode the rights of the populace without representation. Where within the relationship of citizen and government the rules are clear and protections exist, in the relationship with corporations no room exists for such provisions. Although in theory the corporation sees itself as protecting the interests of the stockholders or board of directors in reality these abstract punishments are designed to affect the livelihood of anyone who uses social media to promote their brand or business and the net result is the censorship serves no one.

How does one protect and defend the time spent not getting paid? Rise and grind culture endorses the ethos of spending one's entire life trying to scrounge together any resources available. How much money is actually necessary to sustain one's preferred standard of living and is that expectation unrealistic? Should home ownership or raising children be considered an unrealistic goal?

Many companies not only legislate what employees do while in the workplace but also what happens outside of work hours. In what cases might this be justifiable? Even if someone is bigoted toward other ethnicities or genders, if that does not affect their performance while at work should they be penalized or fired for using slurs in a social media post outside of work? (The author's own opinion is that there should be some kind of repercussions for hate speech against marginalized groups.)

The depersonalization which comes from commodification of labor is incredibly detrimental to societal structure. It separates us from each other in favor of creating false division based on some arbitrary value assigned by corporate interests. What is intrinsically valuable about an individual is ignored and discarded. If we are not allowed to express our true worth we feel worthless and our lives feel as though they lack meaning.

If one is merely using the metric of monetary value to measure one's existence that individual is primed for exploitation by their employer. What is the value of leisure time if one's existence has no meaning outside earning potential? The imperative then becomes to maximize one's earnings rather than feed the body and soul.

This exploitation becomes greater and easier to accomplish when wages no longer meet the cost of living. To rent a one-bedroom in a major city and keep up with all expenses as of the year 2023 one would need a baseline annual income of $60k, and closer to $80k if that person has student loans to pay, credit card debt, or wants to drive a car. This would translate to at least $20/hourof full-time employment, but more realistically someone would have to make $35/hour or more to sustain a comfortable existence. Many currently available jobs do not even offer $20/hour.

Along with the suppression of wages and devaluation of individual value comes the commodification of our hobbies and interests. If your interests are not aligned with prevalent trends you will not have the time and resources to pursue them. Hobbies, even those that lead to some form of income, require time and resources to enjoy. Additionally, true artistic expression cannot occur solely in

a trend-driven environment in which creative resources are dictated by any kind of algorithm. People must be free to create art which does not fit into the prevailing trends, otherwise no innovation can occur.

Passive control of the hearts and minds of the people is easier to exercise than one would hope. For around 80 years in the US cannabis has been tightly regulated and used disproportionately as a punitive tool against underpriviledged classes and ethnicities. What remains legal are alcohol and the pharmacopeia of legal opioids patented by corporations to keep the populace addicted, complacent, and unquestioning. These addictive substances keep those in vulnerable populations in the cycle of underpaid employment to support their chemical dependence. Very rarely is the dependence voluntary and should be treated as illness rather than moral failing.

Once a marginalized person has been incarcerated for a non-violent drug offense that person is now a part of modern legalized slavery. Currently prisoners in the US do not have to be compensated for their labor and are often used in a variety of roles – everything from fine dining service to construction and cleanup. This pipeline exploits a poorly designed educational system which consistently fails this population.

Social media also plays a role in controlling the populace. Short-format videos on these apps have significantly shortened both attention span and critical thinking skills. Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen released internal documents from the tech giant showing that polarizing posts were pushed in the algorithm over less polarizing content. In Myanmar, for example, this was directly linked to political turmoil and a coup did take place. Because less polarizing and non-political content was being suppressed by the algorithm people who previously could post about their artistic endeavors and see a result on the platform suddenly had their engagement dry up. Even paying for a sponsored post was not a guarantee that any of that person's followers would see their posts or event pages.

Purity politics are also being used as a way of suppressing the populace, whether this takes the form of laws banning drag shows or even leftist groups splintering over an inability to reconcile different ideologies. If the leftists could find some way to work together without allowing semantics to create such turmoil within their ranks perhaps they could get enough people elected to overturn the drag bans. Major corporations such as Google (in the guise of being beholden to financial sponsorship) seem especially invested in suppressing mature content and controlling the prevailing social norms of what that means. On YouTube and TikTok creators must self-censor or risk their content being banned or suppressed within the algorithms.

3) Personal liberty and responsibility in the surveillance state

Now more than at any other point in history we have unfettered access to individuals' personal lives. Addresses and contact information are public record, easily searchable by means of technology. Some even go so far as to make tracking their movements and actions much easier by posting to social media platforms, often including GPS tracking markers with their posts. All this access causes us to forget about privacy, discretion, and the overall need to mind one's own business.

Not every topic requires the input of every individual. Here in the United States because liberty of expression is one of our very tenets as a nation, entire industries spring forth based in spraying out one's personal opinion on subjects related to politics, gender identity, body autonomy, and the like. The author's own opinion is based in mindfulness practice in which those things which do not directly affect one's immediate wellbeing are acknowledged and then allowed to pass through one's life without leaving a trace.

So many layers of context, circumstance, and personal freedom are forcibly ejected from the discourse when issues are made polar, yea and nay, right and wrong. Most things we encounter in life do not have a simple yes or no answer, and what is right and true for one may be anathema to another. In a truly free state, these answers are left to the individual and are not displayed in the stockades of public scrutiny.

I personally would like to see more privacy extended into public spaces. Which gender uses which bathroom becomes a total non-issue if the areas designated for waste disposal are made more private. This would also provide a respite for those who wish to take care of basic hygiene functions away from the prying eyes, ears, and noses of others. How many times have you, the reader, been on your way from Dallas to Minneapolis, stopped over in Denver, and wished you could brush your teeth in peace before your connecting flight?

Yet again capitalism strips us of our humanity in this regard. What's to keep unhoused individuals from moving into these spaces as a makeshift dwelling, as has happened in Venice Beach? I will point out here that most beach bathrooms are not a particularly hospitable space and yet someone would still choose that option over being exposed not only to the elements but to public scrutiny. Yet I have not formed my own opinion as to whether or not someone sheltering in a public restroom is right or wrong. Creating the space for these more private facilities would also be tied to the real estate market and the cost per square foot incurred.

In a similar vein, matters of personal autonomy should be left to the discretion of the individual as to how much is made public knowledge. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, passed in 1996, is supposed to guarantee medical confidentiality to those within the US healthcare system. Let's break down how HIPAA is somewhat problematic.

For one, it's not foolproof. Healthcare professionals are often disciplined or dismissed due to disclosing confidential patient information. Some nurses and doctors even have TikTok and other social media accounts where they create content based around non-consenting patients. (I would like to think that by the time you read this, that will have fallen out of fashion.)

Secondly, it's right there in the name. Capitalism strikes again! This legislation was created not to protect private citizens' healthcare confidentiality from just anybody, but from health insurance companies. From that standpoint it's also completely meaningless as trying to switch from one insurance company to another with something deemed a pre-existing condition can be actually impossible.

Third – and this becomes very important from a mental health standpoint – some diagnoses will hunt you for sport regardless of whether they are meant to be confidential or not. An individual is diagnosed with psychosis or schizophrenia and is unable to hold down a job as a result. This individual goes on disability, which does not fully cover their cost of living. If this individual does find another menial source of income their disability payments are cut. Even at many basic jobs, in the current

market, if this person's employer finds out they were or are on disability, it will not be hard for them to find out why. Even though most individuals suffering from schizophrenia are nonviolent and are more likely to be the victim in a crime than the perpetrator, that stigma can lead to cognitive bias on the part of the employer which could lead to that individual either not being able to get a job or being dismissed from a job. The employer will likely cite other factors in this dismissal which means the diagnosed individual cannot seek recourse under federal laws meant to protect them. With what money would they pay their legal representation against the corporation with whom they are in labor dispute anyway?

Personal liberties come with civic responsibility. Each American has a duty to mind their own goddamn business.

4) Decentralization of the current governmental structure

Firstly, I propose to move our center of government from Washington DC, which is located halfway down the east coast. This location was established long before even half of the land mass the United States now occupies was colonized. Consequently the way Western states are run is vastly separate from how things are affected on the east coast. Thus the nation's capitol should be located somewhere in the Midwest – I propose Kansas City.

This untapped gem sits on the state line between Missouri and Kansas, has access to strategic river systems, and is primed for the kind of urban renewal being the nation's capitol would bring. While certainly not all the changes which come from this influx of money would be positive, the net effect nationwide would be beneficial. Those in the middle of the country would finally have the true opportunity to have their voices heard, rather than assumptions being made based on polling and other flawed and indirect systems of communication.

State designations would remain for nostalgic reasons but geographic regions would be subdivided by ecological biome to ensure the best response available for natural disasters and maintaining the natural order of the landmass. Political agendas likewise would be reprioritized to best utilize and support the local ecosystems rather than serving the personal agendas of the representatives.

Representation would be laid out across the entire landmass of the United States as a grid, with one custodian/superintendent every 100 miles. Depending on the jurisdiction and budget this custodian could hire their own staff. The position would be selected in the same fashion as jury duty, with the potential candidates randomly chosen and then narrowed down by the local judiciary. Factors such as education and background may be considered but would not be the entire basis for the selection process.

Congress would be maintained but the new representative system would replace the current executive branch of government, i.e. a sitting president and vice president.

Under this system the voting public would have much more of an impact on national policy than the legislative branch. Annual or quarterly elections would be held on referendum measures to determine what implementations take place. Because of this, measures are narrowed down to a paragraph of one item at a time, eliminating the possibility for pork barrel and tacking unrelated items onto a bill. The wording of such measures should be simplified as much as possible. Additionally this regular interval of voting would be open to all persons physically residing in the United States whether naturalized citizen or not and can replace the US census.

Funding for education, healthcare, infrastructure, and defense must be balanced. Currently an exponential amount of resources are being allocated to defense spending, both military and police. This money should be redistributed into the healthcare, education, and infrastructure budgets such that each sector gets one fifth of the funding, except infrastructure which would require two fifths. Redistribution into healthcare, education, and infrastructure allows for improvements made in society overall such that higher defense spending is unnecessary. This will be further explained in subsequent sections.

Where I use this term “infrastructure” I refer not only to our roads and plumbing but the welfare systems in place which will be required to tackle our current and future housing crisis.

4) Healing our healthcare system

In order to repair the currently dilapidated healthcare system I propose the following changes. Firstly let us discuss the costs.

Currently the US healthcare system is mostly privatized and reliant upon private sector insurance companies, membership in which is still heavily tied to one's employment. This hurts doubly those who are unable to work due to disability and those who struggle to work due to chronic and

congenital conditions. Private insurance must therefore be completely eliminated and the pricing system across the healthcare sector be heavily regulated at the level of the national government, especially in the case of life-saving prescription medications.

Additionally tiers of healthcare can be set up such that more services of a broad nature can be made available to a greater portion of the public. General clinics with free or reduced services will be greatly expanded and will not deviate in format very much from institutions which are currently available. New innovations are highly necessary especially in the realm of mental health as most of the long-term residential facilities have permanently closed and many of the people who would have lived in such a facility are now housing challenged. A return to the previous systems, which were often inhumane and dehumanizing, must also be avoided at all cost.

Privatized healthcare services, especially for elective procedures, may continue to operate. This provides the opportunity for a wider variety of options for those with the financial resources to support it and for free-market competition between more highly skilled professionals. Subsidies will be provided only to healthcare providers operating for the greater public good which would include gender-affirming plastic surgery services to low-income individuals. Thus those who wish to remain independent of government affiliation have the flexibility to do so and thus keep the healthcare system from being completely socialist.

In order to funnel more labor into the field, which will need to be greatly expanded, trade school curriculi will be promoted. I will address more having to do with education in subsequent sections. Doctoral programs may be established from an Ivy League standardized curriculum which could be implemented at the community college level. For on-the-job training, all medical professionals will start out in the public sector and may choose to privatize their practice as their careers develop.

By the government taking a more active role in healthcare the potential for massive job creation increases as scarcity of resources is removed as a factor. Healthcare run for-profit exclusively actually thrives on scarcity which leads to greater death and suffering for the American public. Currently people in this country are being deprived of life-saving treatments based on cost analysis which is in direct conflict with the Hippocratic oath.

While this final paragraph is a bit off-topic from my overall goals I find it very important to report that HIPAA rights among patients within the US are at an increased risk at this time. Many commercial entities, even Facebook and Better Health, have been accused within the legal system of illegally selling patient information. Even my mental healthcare providers have been extremely hesitant to diagnose my condition due to the possibility of it being used to bar me from future employment.

5) Relearning education

Education has been almost completely abandoned in this country as well. The goal of capitalism seems to be restricting the flow of information as much as possible such that only the propaganda is widely available. Unfortunately the brain drain resulting from this long-term policy is creating massive problems in almost every public sector. Everything goes back to being able to effectively educate the populace.

Publicly funded trade schools will be opened on a similar grid system as the establishment of superintendents. These trade schools will provide an Ivy League standardized curriculum in every essential discipline from healthcare to engineering. Previously certain hyperspecialized trades were very difficult to access due to educational barriers. These will be eliminated by this system. Additionally, in cases where unions have established training programs such as is the case with IBEW, those trade programs will be preserved and subsidy programs designed for expansion be made available. These subsidy partnerships will also have curriculum standardization requirements based around the current training programs.

More advanced concepts will be taught at a much earlier age. As I have hinted at previously

there will be an educational initiative in partnership with the top universities in the United States and possibly abroad to create a standardized, high-level curriculum which can then be disseminated using the public school system. A massive expansion of the current system is required – facilities, workforce, brain trust, etc. This standardized curriculum would become the trade-school blueprint for training new educators to enter the workforce.

Safety within our educational institutions has also been greatly challenged in recent history. Corrections made not just gun legislation, which seems an easy scapegoat, but to making mental health services more widely available are so important to improving our schools.

6) Addressing everyone's need for adequate housing

Another greatly overlooked sector of public health is the current housing crisis. While in previous decades many were homeless due to the closure of mental institutions and substance dependence now many have multiple jobs and are still unable to afford decent housing. Living in public spaces is incredibly difficult and forms trauma and new mental distress for individuals not previously suffering from such problems. Thus the damage done by the housing crisis is exponential upon our society.

Coalition for the Homeless, based out of New York City, sets the historical parameter of modern homelessness as the past thirty years. However, the racially and sometimes religiously motivated roots of our current homelessness problems can be traced back even to the inception of this great nation. While the reality of America is that of a melting pot, boiling over with the promise and innovation which comes through the free exchange of ideologies, many throughout our history have striven for segregation and at times genocide. Marginalization by faction has had the culminative modern effect of reducing the generational wealth of many groups purely based on skin color, nationality especially for our native population, religious affiliation, and even gender. These groups were either not allowed to own land, where they were able to buy land was limited by purposefully obfuscated factors, or what land they did own was outright taken. Often in the last case the land was taken by force and mass murder was committed by lynch mobs or the government itself against its own citizenry.

Finland has launched a Housing First initiative. 25% of the housing in a particular area must be allocated as affordable housing. A social worker is assigned to each housing-challenged individual and will assign housing based on that individual's particular needs, including disability and substance dependence issues. Although it seems as though this would cost more than allowing people to remain living in public spaces, the cost is actually lower (in Finland's case by up to €15k per capita, per year). Consider the cost of keeping the public spaces clean, dealing with security and healthcare issues, etc.

Based on this pilot program municipalities across the United States could implement similar initiatives at a locally regulated, federally funded level. These facilities need to be well maintained and well suited to the individuals housed within. A household with multiple members of stratified age will need different accommodation than single-member households. Recent trends in tiny homes and experimental dormitories will not provide the long-term solutions required. Only time-tested housing solutions will be implemented in this portion of the plan.

Ownership of property should be prioritized over the rental market as well, because when funding cuts inevitably occur the quality of rental housing projects declines sharply and rapidly. This will require a sizeable building initiative but as it will not be based on speculation such as the building boom of the mid-2000s the market should remain fairly stable. One possibility for determining who would get such housing is to prioritize households which have not owned their own land in three or more generations. I will address where to obtain this property in a couple of paragraphs' time.

Timeframes for subsidization of these housing availabilities must also be rendered on an individual basis and cannot be predicated by sobriety as this will not fix the underlying issues of homelessness. Mental health services will be necessary in many cases and some individuals may never

attain full independence from this system but it will be necessary to keep people from living in public and unsheltered spaces.

In an elaboration of repairing our healthcare system individuals within the affordable housing system must be provided with mental and physical healthcare resources. This will aid in combatting any addiction or PTSD issues which can be correlated to homelessness. These doctors and therapists cannot be those who are still in training and lack necessary experience but should be well-established in their fields with a focus on the special needs of the housing-challenged. In order to entice those with the best private practice experience incentives should be provided. The annual budget for riot gear in each major city should just about cover it.

Public welfare services such as food programs, healthcare, and housing subsidies must be handled by separate entities, although these can operate within the same organization. This specialization ensures that individuals are able to benefit from well-organized aid rather than the abstract idea of "help".

One major obstacle that renters have faced increasingly in the past few years is the scourge of absentee and LLC-shielded landlords. These absolute leeches hide behind their management companies and lawyers, having no shred of concern for the individuals who are feeding them, but rather instituting massive rent hikes with little or no notice (which is illegal in most areas but difficult to combat under these particular circumstances), failing to repair or purposefully ignoring hazardous living situations (also illegal), and even letting over half of the units in their building stand empty in order to keep market values artificially inflated (should be illegal). In fact, everything in the previous paragraph should be illegal as hell and is absolutely the kind of behavior that got French aristocrats beheaded. I personally demand these individuals be brought swift and unbiased justice.

Often the stock market is labeled "astrology for men" and for very good reason. While both can provide a framework of guidance within which to affect positive action in one's life, neither should be wholesale accepted as the absolute truth of the universe. Both are a little bit fake actually, and the mundane aspects of either being ignored in favor of the ideologies cuts off the practical application.

A problematic and currently disgraced political pundit once told me this bedtime story. Once there were three little pigs, each having their own house. The venture capitalist wolf came along, ate all three, and is now charging three times the rent on each of those properties. For him, the story ended there, but consider the long-term projected earnings possible under these circumstances. By devouring the working class the wolves are no longer receiving any money from them. Those houses stand empty because no one can afford to live there – the price is artificially inflated and the value is now traded as a commodity where the actual property is vacant and its value undermined.

7) Redistribution of bloated defense budgets

Currently our societal structure emphasizes overregulation and punishment over freedom of expression and rehabilitation. In previous portions of this work I have established why the current power structures have operated in this way. However, the emphasis needs to be shifted from a punitive model and funding must be reallocated into public works from the currently overfunded defense sector. Right now, under the Biden-Harris administration, the military receives over half of the national budget. By contrast, education, healthcare, and housing receive only 6% each (total 18%). Local police budgets nationwide look very similar to this. This disparity is ripping apart the very fabric of our culture which is comprised of the individual spirit within each of us.

Within the defense sector budgets are increased annually, padded with unnecessary equipment, and skimmed by corruption. Imagine the possibility for improvement if even a fraction of this bloat were reinvested in other community programs such as housing. Much of the crime may be directly connected to this scarcity of resources and thus would no longer thrive in an environment where these needs are being directly met.

The NYPD budget is currently being completely dismantled, with the 2024 fiscal year allotted spending at $5.4bn, down $88.9bn from the previous fiscal year and comprising 5.3% of the city's total budget for FY2024. We will all be watching to see how this plays out, and a number of factors will have to fall into place for this to be a successful move rather than a disaster.

Property rights are the focus of this punitive system rather than the personal autonomy rights of the citizenry. Those with the resources could easily afford their own personal security, but due to the nature of late-stage capitalism in this country (others as well, but this document focuses on the United States) the judicial system is unavailable and unaffordable to most of the general populace in cases where personal autonomy is concerned. The overturning of Roe vs. Wade is one indicator of this, though not the only one.

8) Unpaid taxes of the ultra-wealthy

Because of the unnecessarily complicated nature of the Internal Revenue Service many of our most wealthy citizens do not actually pay any taxes whatsoever. These mega-parasites can afford greater legal representation than even the United States government itself and therefore it has been deemed financially impractical to prosecute these criminals. If even one of these accounts was brought properly due imagine the improvements to infrastructure that could be made. Often these oligarchs will make “charitable contributions” toward public works projects but these often come with the stipulation of being able to dictate how the funds are spent. Engineers and other trained professionals, as well as the American voting public, should be the ones who get final say in how the infrastructure is maintained. As I illustrated in my introduction, since most of this wealth represents stolen labor and other embezzlement on the part of billionaires, those funds should be seized at least as part of recuperating tax burden if not outright criminal investigation.

Many alternative tax systems have been proposed over the years and my personal favorite hinges upon individual spending. However, much correction will need to take place within the economy of this nation in regards specifically to stolen wages and government regulation of cost of living before any tax system will be able to be fully and effectively implemented. Additionally I recommend treating such wage theft as an extension of slavery into our modern economy and prosecuting it as such.

9) Extension of “freedom for all” outside imperialist structures

Naturalization must also be addressed. Many people are risking their lives to come into this country whether by legally recognized means or not. The benefit of naturalizing these individuals as US citizens far outweighs the detriments. According to PNAS Volume: 117 Issue: 51 Dated: December 2020 Pages: 32340-32347, U.S.-born citizens are over 2 times more likely to be arrested for violent crimes, 2.5 times more likely to be arrested for drug crimes, and over 4 times more likely to be arrested for property crimes.

Similar to the implementation and rollout of the trade-school system, naturalization schools would be established to teach basic United States political structure, law, and general practices such as obtaining a drivers' license and paying one's taxes. Part of the graduation process for this program would be obtaining the legal documentation supporting one's citizenship and would ensure that the participant exits the program equipped with skills to succeed within this country. The added benefit would be that these programs are then also accessible to US-born citizens and would fill those gaps in the current system.

Additionally there must be an initiative to recover as much of the history of this continent as possible. Much of the archaeological record has been erased or disregarded due to colonial attitudes regarding the indigenous, original inhabitants as well as marginalized immigrants such that only the

most recent memories remain and nothing of the eastern native cultures has been preserved. The positive effect of this is to establish the ancient origins of our culture and strengthen our timeline as a society.

10) Preserving the majesty of our purple mountains

Ecological factors and sustainable practices must also be researched and implemented at this time. Currently new sustainable solutions are only predicated by the funding going into the specific type of research benefiting the source of said funding. Grants are awarded to high-profile issues leaving massive blind spots and gaps. One example is how overengineering the bullet train between Los Angeles and the Bay Area has prevented the entire project from coming to fruition. Such a light-speed rail project could easily have connected these two metropolitan areas in a way that would have proven effective but due to an already massive budget the plan cannot take place at all.

California would be an excellent place to increase solar and wind energy initiatives due to the desert. This of course would have to take place with the guidance of ecologists to prevent damage to the ecosystem.

Scientific research too would benefit from a certain amount of this oversight. The Pfizer and Moderna Covid vaccines, which are a mRNA model, were rolled out even in a highly experimental stage of development which superceded the usual lengthy process usually required. The Covid vaccine could have been released in a more standard, already established form but private interests (read: oligarchy) strong-armed the FDA into prematurely approving this technology in order to maximize their own profits. The result of this is that the comorbidities and side effects of this vaccine model will never be properly studied and documented. Many adverse effects of these vaccines are being reported and covered up. It will be nearly impossible to evaluate each case accurately to determine if the vaccine was or was not the cause. Scientific method has come too far for us to return now to the haphazard and rogue techniques used by Dr. Edmund Jenner.

Alternative forms of independently mobile public transportation must be made available. The focus on such systems so far has hinged upon electric cars. However, the energy required to power an electric vehicle is limited by the storage systems. Currently lithium batteries are the most prevalent storage option. This innovation has of course been limited by the financial prerogative of private interests. Better innovation is possible. The robber-barons with a choke-hold on the economy are by no stretch of the imagination our best and brightest.

Likewise our dependence on oil for so much of our power grid has been driven by the financial interests of the oligarchy. Lobbyists for the auto industry are just one example of the people who have vested themselves in severely limiting our innovation as a culture. We have not just been robbed of our wages but of unexplored intellectual property as well. Inventors have been silenced by these individuals who do have home addresses.

11) Third-space infrastructure and sustainable artist communities

Finally, I would like to address my own interest in the creation of this work – the marginalization of creative third-space within our society. Not only mainstream artists deserve a space in which their artistic vision may be realized, and without an underground arts scene only nepo babies are able to enter the field of the arts. These individuals may have some artistic vision to offer but most of their experiences are linked to their privilege and therefore irrelevant to the populace at large as an outlet for our collective shared experiences. Art must, in some form, adequately express any aspect of the culture which speaks to this collective experience and thus the creative pool must be greatly stratified. My personal favorite, Orchestral Manoevers in the Dark, speak openly in their documentary of being on public assistance while creating their much beloved albums. Only during the pandemic

when stimulus money was provided as a universal basic income did most people experience what anyone with a trust fund considers to be reality.

Many of the experimental artists whom I consider good friends have this mentality that money is an evil and absolute corrupting force to any form of creative expression. While NOTAFLOF (no one turned away for lack of funds) is a very important part of the accessibility of this community, the needs of those who take part cannot be separated from currency. People need money for gas, sometimes lodging, set pieces, software, instruments, and other amenities. The choice does not have to be either zero dollars or $1k. Providing any kind of stipend helps offset the costs associated with performance which should never be wholly absorbed by the artists themselves. This attitude towards money is by no means universal in underground music but does inform the culture greatly. Often the end of noise shows is spent by the artists apologizing to each other as they shove cassette tapes into each others' hands. Give your work much more credit. It cannot be spawned from the ether.

Prior to the aforementioned Ghost Ship fire consolidated, co-op style artist housing was much more widespread. As in the case of the three little pigs, who had a really sick performance act from what I hear, many spaces now stand vacant because of the perception that their earning potential cannot be fully tapped. Especially where communal living space is concerned safety and building codes should be the primary concern. By offering these spaces at a reduced rate to those who have the construction skills to undertake necessary renovations revitalization of marginalized communities has the ground on which to take place. These marginalized communities of course extend beyond the perennial “first-wave gentrifiers” of the artist community to encompass those who are currently living in RVs, tents, cars, or on the street. The unhoused are incredibly resourceful and their talents are being wasted on the daily grind which stems from a lack of proper housing. Imagine the potential if even 10% more resources were being made available to them.

Most of the libraries in the greater Los Angeles area provide a haven for those who need internet, electricity, air conditioning, and public restrooms. These spaces are also typically quiet and well maintained, with a few exceptions and gaps in infrastructure which are to be expected from a publicly funded entity. The public parks too are usually equipped with either portable, pit, or flushing toilets which reduces the amount of human waste left in the public space. These spaces are subject to certain rules and regulations in order to maintain order and harmony for those who use them and thus are not always the best place to work on one's personal projects. (Especially those requiring amplification.)

Underground Atlanta has recently been enticing artists to rent gallery and studio space in what were once storefronts. However, even from one lease to the next the rent has doubled and the end goal is well-known: commercial development.

Tulsa's Gathering Place, located on the banks of the Arkansas River, is packed with public amenities available without an admission charge. Kayaks and paddleboats are included in these free amenities, as are many architecturally significant play structures and concrete skate park ramps. Due to liability laws in the US, many of the investors for this project are based abroad.

These are only a couple of examples of how these projects can be achieved and by no stretch provide the only blueprint for success. Late-stage capitalism frames everything within a scarcity mentality and this has the effect of suppressing innovation. Let your conscience be your guide.

Resources

https://www.youtube.com/@NavajoTraditionalTeachings

Lecture by Dr. Steven Lekson https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFbbwrPxfWU

https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/unabomber/manifesto.text.htm

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https://www.gatheringplace.org/

https://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/howardcenter/caring-for-covid-homeless/stories/homeless-funding-housing-first.html

https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org

https://www.cdc.gov/phlp/publications/topic/hipaa.html

Appendix I – Trey Bliss rebuttal (after first draft)

A lot to unpack, give me a few days.

One aspect of the healthcare argument, the unintentional consequence of banning cigarette advertising in the 1980s was the first advertising for medical products which until that time had not been permitted to advertise drugs. This singular even turned healthcare from the greater good to whims and mercy of capitalist tendencies.

One could argue the progress in medicine and treatments have advanced given the vast gap between innovations in the US versus the rest of the world, but these innovations have their costs that have made healthcare largely unaffordable and at this point the genie is out of the bottle and there is no going back to the system of the 70s and the current European models are increasingly looking insolvent or inadequate over the coming decades.

It will be interesting and important to figure out the marriage of healthcare as a public good combined with the profit motive as a sustainable and necessary component of society, especially as the boomer generation dies off in the coming two decades.

I haven't finished reading your thesis (and will) but I believe a lot of the outline you present will be solved as the conservative boomer generation dies off and all that is left are conservatives largely fueled by hate with a Barry Goldwater and John Birch Society that gets laughed off the electoral map.

Looking at history we see how Goldwater turned off the GOP in 1964 but an unpopular war and factions with the Democrats opened the door for Nixon in 68, but the Republicans didn't cease control of Congress from 1955 to 1995 with the Newt Gingrich Contract with America.

I can see another 40 year wave for Democrats if they stop stepping on their dicks and have their Joseph McCarthy confrontation moment asking these radical conservatives "have you no sense of decency."

As for the artist conundrum, I fear that the 20th Century was the aberration where creative and artistic people could fund their careers with their art. The idea started with Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks founding United Artists as a movie studio for creativity and creatives and spread into the 60s music industry with labels that cared about art that could make money.

The lack of curation, especially in music, has created a pyramid, similar to the fate boxing has found it in where those at the very top make all the money and 98% of those do it on hopes, dreams, and passion. I fear we are headed back to the centuries old trading of patronship, where you need the wealthy to support the arts and fund those not to make a profit and not treat art like an investment but because they personally enjoy it.

The film/tv has been able to avoid this fate the last decade, largely because of the advent of streaming and the need for content, but consolidation is coming in the years ahead and this too will likely dry up as a career path to make money.

I agree with immigration, first do a Reagan type bill giving citizenship to every one in the country already and then an 18 month allowance to come into the country and gain citizenship like we did over 100 years ago. This is especially important as the population replacement rate in the US has dipped below 2.0, meaning for every two people currently in the US there are now only 1.9 people being

created which will not support economic growth.

We don't want to be Japan where the population replacement rate is 0.9 and the country sells more adult diapers than baby diapers.

For this immigration plan to pass we need Trump to run and have all the Conservatives bring out their crazies to run too and have the Complacents get out to vote and win a majority in the House and Senate. You can't run on these policies I'm outlining, but these are the goals and you wink and nod to them. It will be difficult with the apathy towards Biden, but this next election gives the chance to pivot to the middle for the election and then enact something akin to the New Deal that outlines many of the progressive policies you outline, but you need a super majority to get it done and that will only happen by first moving to the middle.

I'm not a fan of the housing initiatives you outlined, mainly because these were already tried in the 1960s and resulted in the housing project crisis by the 80s and 90s and were demolished. It's a great concept but as soon as recession hits and funding gets cut, these low cost housing communities soon fall in disrepair and because it's cheap housing, there is little thought to maintenance and upkeep.

Here's my solution...
Instead of rent free or subsidized rent, you offer ownership with no interest 15 year loans where if you live there for 15 years, you now own that property. You could then take out a home equity loan or sell the place for a profit to establish another residence. I feel that ownership provides more responsibility than renting and you will care more for your property if you know it can be yours.

I haven't heard anyone else proposing such an idea, but every five years you establish a new set of these communities so there is constant opportunity for ownership. I think you could get the big banks to buy into the program because they are building future wealth and potential opportunities to a large segment of the population that is untapped by banks.